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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a brief review of the Lewiston program and evaluates the vocational education project on the basis of the objectives around which it was originally developed. Each of fourteen objectives listed is discussed in terms of how well and effectively the objective was met during the tenure of the project. Major factors considered include the project's growth and progression, its exposure to adult education students, the success of its job performance evaluations and follow-up, the program's role in helping drop-outs, and its involvement with employers, State and local agencies and apprenticeship programs. Learning packages and pre-employment evaluations developed by the program and strategies employed by the program to publish a placement guide, to determine employment trends and to establish an advisory committee are also evaluated. Commendations are presented and recommendations concerning the continuation and improvement of the program are made. (EB)

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LEWISTON EXEMPLARY PROGRAM
IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

THIRD PARTY EVALUATION
of the
LEWISTON JOB DEVELOPMENT, PLACEMENT AND FOLLOW-UP PROGRAM
Conducted Under Part D of Public Law 90-576

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June, 1978

OVERVIEW AND GENERAL INFORMATION:

Three years ago, Lewiston High School designed and implemented an Exemplary Program conducted under Part "D" of Public Law 90-576 entitled "Job Development, Placement and Follow-up".

This experimental project, funded by the Department of Educational and Cultural Services, Augusta, Maine, was developed primarily to assist students presently enrolled in Lewiston High School, recent school graduates, early school leavers and adults in finding full-time and part-time employment and to make available supportive services in the various job-seeking skills and techniques.

By providing this service, the Job Placement Office was able to extend the effectiveness of the educational process of the Lewiston area based on the philosophy that actual training and experience gained in the job market by placement in actual working situations would be most productive in the preparation of today's citizens for entry into a career-oriented, high-competitive-type society.

Moreover, it was determined that more and more of our young people attending high school are in need of full-time and/or part-time employment in order to continue and complete their education and in many cases, survive economically.

This project has been viewed and evaluated on the basis of the

objectives around which it was originally developed and in terms of how well and effectively those objectives have been met during the tenure of the project.

An on-site visitation of the project was conducted on June 1, 1978 after a thorough review of the documentation pertaining to the project. As a result of this visitation which included personal observations, interviews and discussions with students, staff and administration the following is presented.

Frederick St.Cyr

OBJECTIVES:

Objective No. 1: To Expand and Refine Job Development and Placement Activity:

Over the three year period during which the job placement project has been in operation, there has been an indication of continuous growth and progression in terms of the numbers of student contacts made and the number of referrals and placements in work situations.

At the time of the on-site evaluation there were still several weeks of school remaining and the statistical data for the conclusion of the 1977-1978 school year was in the process of being gathered and compiled. At that point in time there were indications of another year of tremendous growth in contacts and referrals and all indications were that this progression would be even greater with students looking for part-time summer employment and graduates looking for full time employment.

The following chart is indicative of this three year growth pattern:

	75-76	76-77	77-78**
Number of Student Contacts	936	1143	1922
Referrals to Employers	348	1014	1240*
Placement Activity	179	374	290
Job Development	269	477	469

* This total reflects the following:

825	High School Students
197	Adults
166	Drop outs
58	Graduates
44	Others
1240	TOTAL

** 1977-1978 Statistics were as of 5-19-78 with a definite increase projected before school closed.

There is no doubt that this particular objective has been met and exceeded in terms of initial expectations and is indicative of the need to have the project continue.

Data collection techniques have been streamlined and refined enabling virtually immediate retrieval of information whether it pertains to a potential employer or employee.

Objective No. 2: To Expand and Refine Job Performance Evaluation After Placement:

Job performance evaluations have been used in varying degrees throughout the duration of the project with a variety of successes. Evaluation after placement is not presently as effective as it might or should be, however, the entire operation is now staffed with two people who are directly involved in and responsible for record keeping, interviews, classroom instruction in job seeking skills and techniques, referrals and a miriad of other tasks and responsibilities which result in making job performance evaluation virtually an impossible task.

Periodic evaluations have been made, however, with an estimated response of about sixty per cent. Additional staff would most assuredly assist the project in meeting this objective.

Objective No. 3: To Expand and Refine Follow-up of Graduates:

Due to lack of sufficient time and personnel and the absence of an efficient and effective follow-up instrument the project has not succeeded in its intent to conduct a complete and comprehensive follow-up of its graduates.

According to the Project Director, over involvement with logistics of the follow-up activity and the actual mechanics of developing and designing a valid follow-up survey instrument have hampered its progress and success.

It was anticipated that the follow-up would be conducted in cooperation and conjunction with the Lewiston High School guidance department but this did not materialize. Interest in this joint effort still remains in high priority and it is my understanding that an attempt to implement a follow-up study of the graduates of the Class of 1978 is anticipated.

Objective No. 4: To Expand and Refine Contact With Employers:

Available data indicates explicitly that contact with employers is at an extreme high level of effectiveness. This involvement with employers is, without question, one of the major attributes to the success of this project.

Objective No. 5: To Expand and Refine Feedback From Employers and Students on Total Lewiston High School Instructional Program.

Available data is indicative that this objective has not been met effectively to date. Refer to commentary relative to Objectice No. 3.

It is imperative that during the next phase of the project special emphasis be placed on the gathering and utilization of student and employer data.

Objective No. 6: To Expand and Refine Identification of and Contact With Early School Leavers:

The drop-out problem is not unique to the City of Lewiston and is one that faces virtually every school and community in the Nation. More young people are leaving the security of their families to become independently "liberated" and are consequently looking for any type of employment as a means of survival.

Literature and research tells us that young people in this category more often find the need for full-time employment dominating their need and desire for an education thus compounding the drop-out problem.

In this sense one might view the Job Placement Office and its service as an alternative program designed to give the potential drop-out an option by making part-time employment available as supplemental to the required high school gratuation credit programs.

There is strong evidence that many employers do not look to the drop-out as favorable employees and that one very important function of the project might be to place emphasis on work attitudes, survival skills and job seeking techniques to better prepare this type of individual for the labor market.

Cooperation with and between the project and other public and private agencies has been phenominal including, but not limited to, the Lewiston Job Service and the Androscoggin Comprehensive Training Program.

Probably the main contributing factor in the success of dealing with the drop-out and the potential drop-out has been the close cooperation and coordination between the project and the Lewiston High School Guidance Department.

Objective No. 7: Program Exposure to Adult Education Students:

During fiscal year 1975-1976, the project recorded sixty-one contacts with adults; fiscal year 1976-1977, the second year of the project recorded seventy-nine. The third year of the project, fiscal year 1977-1978 revealed that as of May 19, 1978 one-hundred-ninty-seven adults had been served!

These are the referrals that took place during the evening hours and do not necessarly include those adults who visited the program office during the school day, students who left full-time day school programs to enter adult education programs, referrals from the Lewiston Job Service, or referrals directly from administration, faculty and guidance.

While contact with adult education persons has increased markedly, actual referrals and placement declined sharply. This could be remedied by maintaining nightly office hours five days a week ans adding a full-time adult education job placement specialist and clerical person.

Objective No. 8: To Expand and Refine Relationship with Maine Employment Security Commission and Other State and Local Agencies.

As previously reported, the project has been extremely successful in its rapport and relationship with the Lewiston Job Service and other agencies. At one point during the project, the Lewiston Job Service assigned a manpower specialist to the project office. This position was later eliminated due to the elimination of staff at the Job Service Office. It is my understanding that this position will be reinstated once the staffing pattern improves at the Lewiston Job Service Office.

This cooperative effort among various agencies tends to eliminate costly duplication and each agencies activities enhances the performance of the others in terms of resources which benefit students.

Objective No. 9: To Expand and Refine Contact with Apprenticeship Programs.

Apprenticeship programs are aware of the project and its merits and appropriate materials pertaining to apprenticeship programs are readily available to anyone desirous of information.

Materials received pertaining to apprenticeship programs are made available to students either through the project office or are disseminated through the various Trade and Industrial programs of the Lewiston Vocational Center.

There is some degree of repitition since many of the same materials are distributed by the guidance department but duplication is sometimes healthy in terms of the materials being distributed.

Objective No.10: To Develop and Implement Flexible Career Education Units to be Presented in Group Seminars.

The Job Placement Office has indeed been very fortunate to have at its disposal the materials developed by the Lewiston Modular Curriculum Development Program and its facilities.

Many many learning packages (LAP's) have been utilized by the Job Placement Office but three in particular have become a focal point in terms of orientation programs dealing with job skills and techniques. These are as follows:

Your Resume, What to Include
by D. C. Cannan, November, 1976

Filling Out a Job Application Form
by R. C. Read, 1975

Your Job Interview
by D. C. Cannan, January 1977

In personal interviews with studentsthat were or had been involved in the program there was no question to the value of these Learning Activity Packages and the manner in which information was presented to the participants.

The information was covered in minute detail and each student as the end result developed his or her own resume and a tremendous amount of self-confidence.

Mock interviews, some of which were reduced to video tape for instructional purposes also played an important part in the orientation program.

Objective No. 11: To Develop A Means of Gathering Comprehensive Pre-employment Evaluations on all Program Enrollees.

This objective was not met as originally anticipated primarily because proposed methods were highly subjective, incomplete, and, for the most part, very expensive to purchase, administer and evaluate.

In addition, time and manpower involved in gathering comprehensive pre-employment data was prohibitive.

Objective No. 12: To Publish and Disseminate a Secondary School Job Development and Placement Guide for Working with the Maine Job Service.

It is my understanding that preliminary work has been carried out over the three year duration of the project with the final draft hopefully nearing completion in 1978.

Objective No. 13: To Conduct a Local Business Survey During August and September, 1976, to Determine Employment Trends for the Upcoming Academic Year.

This was not done, however, the Lewiston Job Service made comprehensive data available on all area employers who employed fifteen or more.

In addition, a letter explaining the project in brief was sent to local employers as a means of promoting greater awareness among business and industry and developing more possible job stations for students on both a full-time and part-time basis.

This apparently has proved to be quite successful in terms of responses and placements.

Objective No. 14: To Establish an Advisory Committee Consisting of Faculty, Students, Local Businessmen and Responsible Citizens.

A "formal" advisory committee was not formed however, continuous feedback was evident from the above mentioned factions.

Establishment of priorities and decision making has been for the most part carried out by the Project Director with periodic consultations with faculty, business, students, citizens, etc., etc., when deemed necessary.

An Advisory Committee is of absolute necessity in my opinion however, in order to function effectively and efficiently they must be given direction, responsibility, and a sense of purpose before they can function productively.

COMMENDATIONS:

I applaud the Lewiston Job Development, Placement and Follow-up Program for having the insight to identify a problem and invest the time, energy and resources in an attempt to remedy that problem. The service afforded the young people and adults in the Lewiston area through the benefits of this program will not only meet immediate needs but are certain to have far-reaching inplications.

During interviews with students and staff I am of the opinion that this project has met with marked success in measurable and realistic terms.

I commend the administration and staff that have been involved in the project from its inception to its present status for their determination and desire to meet the needs of those in need.

Finally, I commend the Project Director, Mr. Kenneth Jordan, and his highly competent staff, particularly Ms. Wendy Marquis and Ms. Irene Binnette for their determination and hard work in achieving all that the project was designed to do within limitations of time, space and energy.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Of greatest priority I strongly recommend a continuation of the project. If additional funding from State/Federal sources is not available I would urge the City of Lewiston and the Lewiston School Department to budget moneys to be used for not only continuation but expansion of the project.

The project presently is greatly understaffed in comparison with the numbers of referrals and contacts made. The position of Project Coordinator should be reinforced with allowance for sufficient clerical, referral and secretarial help. In addition, the office should be open and available nightly particularly during peak times of the year when adult education programs are in operation. Special emphasis should be placed on making the services available during the early summer months for the purpose of summer full-time and part-time job referrals.

The project should be continually monitored and evaluated in terms of full utilization of staff, time and facilities. This statistical data would be valuable in terms of improving services and planning for ensuing years.

An efficient and effective follow-up study instrument should be developed and implemented as a means of improving the project. This study should encompass both student population and business and industry.

I would recommend that the job orientation program conducted by the project staff be amplified to include more young people. This could be coordinated with the English department and be moved back into grades eleven, ten and even nine. The comment I heard most frequently was that the students wished

they had been exposed to resume writing and interview techniques at an earlier time rather than waiting in many cases until their last year of school.

Some type of pre-employment evaluation should be used as a means of determining student interest and skill areas. This would enhance the project by identifying potential and possible areas of interest early in the game. One instrument I would personally recommend is the O.V.I.S. (Ohio Vocational Interest Survey).. Its results are valid. It is easy to interpret (accomplished by the students themselves) and is relatively inexpensive to buy, administer and score. This can be administered through the English Department at the sophomore level with great success. I have used this particular instrument for three years and would be happy to discuss its merits, advantages and disadvantages.

A guide should be developed and disseminated to secondary schools as a model for those who wish to use the concept and establish Job Placement programs of their own. I feel the demand would be considerable and the outcome rewarding.

The establishment of an Advisory Committee is a necessity providing they have a definite purpose and are not merely a "rubber stamp" group. Every community has a resource of people whose expertise and advice can definitely enhance a program. Each member should be selected on the basis of what he or she can contribute toward the betterment and improvement of the concepts of the project and not merely for the prestige attached to the position.

Continued emphasis should be placed on providing young people, regardless of who or what they are or have been, with the basic skills necessary for them to be competative with society. This can be best accomplished through a

continuation of the Job Placement Project.

More emphasis should be placed on public relations and "getting the word out" since community relations plays a major role in the success of a project such as this.

Provision should be made for more in-depth counseling of students to better enhance the established open door policy which is in existance. I have observed the techniques used during the counseling and interview process and I would say for the most part they are excellent. I do think that time and depth, however, are a factor.

More physical space should be made available if at all possible. For example: Cubicles could be added to the existing office area for the purpose of conducting more private and intimate interviews. Presently clients are almost "on display" and this may have a tendancy to discourage those who need and could benefit from the services available through the project. A large room or conference area should be made available for group counseling and/or testing.

Finally, I would only amphasize my opening recommendation of continuance of the project. Projected costs are minimal compared to the benefits to people. This project has given many people a new lease on life, confidence in themselves, and the challenge that they are and can be competative, self-supporting and successful.